

has objected to this proposed amendment, which will enable the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Political Committee to participate in the work of the General Committee in the same manner as the chairmen of other main committees of the General Assembly. The second amendment concerns Rule 73 (113). It is this proposed amendment which has given rise to most of the debate and considerable confusion at the present session. Some delegations seem to be doubtful about its effect. They suspect that it will place an unnecessary restriction on the right of freedom of speech. The Canadian Delegation does not share this view. The Canadian Delegation has listened attentively to those delegates and particularly to the distinguished delegate from the Soviet Union who attempted to argue that this amendment would restrict the right of free debate and infringe the sovereign right of member governments to freely express their views on any issue before the United Nations. The Soviet delegate's argument on this point, Mr. Chairman, was, in our view, very weak and completely unconvincing.

We thought that the distinguished delegates from China and Greece pointed out, in a very clear and convincing manner, that the proposed amendment to Rules 73 and 113, could have no other effect than to limit the debate on a purely procedural point. Its purpose is solely to limit the time of the debate on whether the debate on the item before the assembly or committee should be limited. We entirely agree that this is the only interpretation that can rightly be put on the words of the proposed amendment. In other words, its purpose is solely to limit the time of a procedural debate and in no way could it prevent any delegation from freely expressing the views of its government on the main item under consideration. We do not see the logic of the argument that a possible limitation of the time for a procedural debate would, in itself, be a means of preventing any Member State from presenting its view on the item under consideration. A procedural debate would, by its nature, be restricted to a point of procedure and must exclude the merits of the item on the agenda. This must be clear to all delegations in this committee. Moreover, we do not think that the debate on the main item before the Assembly should be unnecessarily delayed or extended by a long, time-consuming procedural debate in which sixty delegates might make lengthy speeches on a procedural point. Surely lengthy procedural debates are not in the best interests of the United Nations or in the spirit of the Charter.

The Soviet delegate was, in our view, on very weak ground when he tried to convince this committee that this proposed amendment would prevent delegations from freely expressing their government's views on any item on the agenda of the United Nations. He neglected to emphasize, and I think this is important for all delegations to keep in mind when considering this proposed amendment, that Rule 73 (113), as amended, will still be subject to the wishes of the majority of delegations in the General Assembly or any of the committees. If the majority of delegations do not want to limit the procedural debate, they do not have to. They can simply vote against any